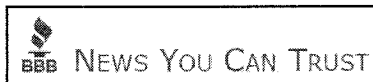


FREE CLASSIFIEDS: Spokane.net

 Tuesday, March 24, 2009
 Search: DATE: Go
 BILL NO.

Town Resources Business & Technology On The Town Sports Stay Connected Help Yourself Adventure Fun Stuff

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People on the Move
Political/Judicial
Public Health
Recreation
Scam and Fraud Alerts
Science & Technology
Sports
Wash. DSHS
Wash. Fish and Wildlife



Search and Rescue Charities: Deceptive Donation Pitches Draw Red Flags in MT

Search and Rescue Charities
 866-588-9869
www.sarcharities.org

3760 Market Street NE #602
 Salem, OR 97301-1826

PO Box 111990
 Tacoma, WA 98411-1990

PO Box 1611
 Tacoma, WA 98401-1611

Spokane, WA - 08/04/08 - Last week the Gallatin County Sheriff's Office issued a news release after they were made aware by several local citizens that they are being solicited by phone for donations by the above mentioned group that is misrepresenting itself as the "Bozeman Search and Rescue." They then receive a donation form in the mail from the group. The Sheriff's Office reported that one such mailing went to a deceased person's residence, which raised a red flag.

This questionable group states that your "donation" will directly help the search and rescue activities in your area. The solicitors are registered with the Montana Secretary of State as Search and Rescue Charities but the sheriff's office has found that local agencies are not receiving any benefits or donation dollars from this group.

The Sheriff's Office confirmed with the Gallatin County Search and Rescue that it was not soliciting funds by phone, and knew nothing of this group that's supposedly calling people on its behalf.

Advertisement

Montana Foreclosures

Homes in your area - only \$10,000. Sign up for \$1 to search listings!
www.RealtyStore.com

Charitable Donations

Gift the Alzheimer's Association to support care, research and cure.
www.alz.org/donate

Need Donation Values?

Find Fair Market Values, increase your charitable donation deduction.
www.CharityDeductions.com

Phone Equipment Montana

Find Phone Equipment & Systems Dealers at
Superpages.com
www.Superpages.com



The Sheriff's Office found that this soliciting agency originates in Washington State and has no affiliation with local Search and Rescue groups. It has also confirmed that this group is using a local MT mail box that has mail forwarded to the PO Box 111990, TACOMA WA 98411-1990 drop box.

This group is registered with the Washington State Secretary of State's Charitable Division as Search and Rescue Charities but also lists additional names it solicits as or under or for, including: Needy Children's Shopping Spree aka Operation Summer Camp (using an Issaquah, WA address), Cancer Exam Network, Children's Safety Bureau, Inland

Empire Bloodhounds, Lyle B. Cain Post 902 Veterans of Foreign Wars, Search And Rescue Charities, Seattle Seafair Pirates Fund, Tri-Cities Crime Stoppers, and Washington Wing Civil Air Patrol.

The names Needy Children's Shopping Spree aka Operation Summer Camp has been on the BBB's radar before as the Great Falls Needy Children's Shopping Spree and the Needy Children's Shopping Spree which has also raised concerns from area Montanans in the past.

Montanans have been solicited by this group for donations, and at the time were told that their donation would directly aid needy children in Great Falls. At the time, no authorities could find proof that this group actually was directing donations to any children's fund or cause in Montana.

This charity's web site at: www.sarcharities.org raises red flags. It is privately registered with a domain registrar called ContactPrivacy.com of Toronto, Canada, which means that there is no direct registrant information available for this site. The site's donation page is not secure, and there is no privacy policy posted to the site itself. BBB says that any legitimate charity would be more transparent in disclosing its whereabouts, and would not utilize a variety of PO Box drops throughout the region. Ethical solicitors would not deceive the public by attempting to align themselves with other efforts that ultimately receive no benefits from them.

BBB ADVICE

Be a WISE donor! Always be cautious of phone solicitations that use official names to draw you into their plea. Check out any solicitors asking for donations directly with the group they

are saying they represent. If the official agency hasn't heard anything about them, then think twice about donating to them, and report it to your BBB and your local law enforcement.

Check out charitable solicitors by contacting your Secretary of State with whom they must register PRIOR to donating. Take into consideration the following guidelines as well, from the BBB Wise Giving Alliance:

Watch Out For Name Confusion

Look carefully at the charity's name on the appeal. Many of the more than 850,000 organizations that have received charitable tax-exempt status from the IRS raise money for the same cause, and names that sound similar to those of well-known organizations are often used to confuse. If you receive a telephone solicitation, ask questions and don't hesitate to request all information be mailed to you. If your request is refused, hang up.

Question Vague Appeals

Make sure the charity's appeals clearly identify the nature of the charity's programs. For example, if the charity says it's helping people displaced by a disaster, does it explain how it is helping (through shelter, food, or medical care) and where it is providing this help? Again, ask questions and listen carefully to the answers.

Don't Give In Easily

Don't be pressured to make an immediate, on-the-spot donation, particularly if a solicitor is at your door asking for a "cash-only" donation. Charities should welcome your gift whenever you want to send it, and should be willing to take donations via check or credit card.

Remember, Not All Soliciting Groups Are Charities

If you want to take a charitable deduction for federal income tax purposes, make sure the organization is tax exempt as a charity under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. To verify a charity's tax status, visit the IRS Web site or call 1-877-829-5500.

If you have an unresolved issue concerning a charity, file formal complaints with your BBB at: www.bbb.org and your state AG's Office.

###

Contact:

Zan Deery
Communications/Investigations
zan@spokane.bbb.org
Better Business Bureau Serving Eastern Washington, North Idaho & Montana
152 S. Jefferson, Suite 200
Spokane, WA 99201
509-455-4200 or 800-356-1007
www.spokane.bbb.org

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Childrens Safety Bureau

Registration #853

Mailing Address: PO Box 98822
 SEATTLE WA 98198

Street Address: 25904 SE 164th Street
 ISSAQUAH WA 98027

Status Active

Also Known As Name(s) Needy Childrens Shopping Spree
 Operation Summer Camp

Phone (206)850-4618

Fax

Email

Web Site

Purpose Description Provide safety materials regarding the welfare of children and provide Christmas gifts to needy children.

Federal EIN 94-3110915

Federal Tax Status Exempt 501C3

The following financial information has been provided to the Office of the Secretary of State by the above-named organization. Figures are for the organization's fiscal year ending **Dec 31, 2007**.

Beginning Assets \$10,375

Revenue \$286,952

Program Services \$139,022

Total Expenses \$275,547

Ending Assets \$21,780

According to the financial information shown at left, this organization devoted **51%** of its total expenses to program services during the year reported.

Some Charitable Organizations are not required to submit financial information. If the financial report displayed contains zeros or outdated information, it is possible that the organization is "exempt" from registration or is newly registered. Please contact the Charities Program for more specific information.

Commercial Fundraisers or Co-Venturers Utilized (past & present)

A Growing Concern, Ltd.

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DISCLAIMER

Information in the Secretary of State's Online Charities Database is updated once daily at 2:00 a.m. Pacific Time, Monday-Friday (state holidays excluded). Neither the State of Washington nor any agency, officer, or employee of the State of Washington warrants the accuracy, reliability, or timeliness of any information in the Public Access System and shall not be liable for any losses caused by such reliance on the accuracy, reliability, or timeliness of such information. While every effort is made to ensure the accuracy of this information, portions may be incorrect or not current. Any person or entity who relies on information obtained from the System does so at his or her own risk.

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